

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 109579

STADIS//////////

FOL REPEAT TEGUCIGALPA 2114 ACTION SECSTATE 28 APR.

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 2114

STADIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, HO

SUBJECT: IMPACT OF NEW SECURITY ASSISTANCE LEGISLATION ON
MAAGS AND SIMILAR ADVISORY MISSIONS OVERSEAS

REF: STATE 94277

1. I BELIEVE THAT THE US MILITARY PRESENCE IS OF GREAT
IMPORTANCE TO THE ATTAINMENT OF US OBJECTIVES IN HONDURAS.
IT IS CLEAR THAT OUR RELATIONS WITH THE HONDURAN MILITARY
ESTABLISHMENT WILL CONTINUE TO BE VERY IMPORTANT BECAUSE OF
THE CENTRAL ROLE THE MILITARY PLAYS IN DIRECTING THE GOVERN-
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MENT AND ITS POLICIES. THIS WILL REMAIN TRUE EVEN IF THERE

IS A RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT, BECAUSE OF THE DETERMINATION OF THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP TO PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN DETERMINING THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF HONDURAN SOCIETY. THEREFORE, A REASONABLE US MILITARY PRESENCE DOES PROVIDE REAL ADDITIONAL LEVERAGE TO THE MISSION.

2. OUR MILITARY PRESENCE IS A "FOOT IN THE DOOR" FOR ANY FUTURE CONTINGENCY WHICH COULD DEVELOP. TO ELIMINATE THIS PRESENCE IS TO POSSIBLY LESSEN OUR FUTURE ABILITY TO REENTER THE HONDURAN POLITICAL/MILITARY SCENE.

3. HONDURAS, ALONG WITH ITS OTHER CENTRAL AMERICAN NEIGHBORS, HAS A RELATIVELY STRONG PERCEPTION OF THE CUBAN THREAT. HONDURANS LEADERS REGARD THE US MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE COUNTRY AS A COMFORTING ASSURANCE OF US INTEREST AND CONCERN VIS-A-VIS THIS POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT. ELIMINATION OF THE US MILITARY PRESENCE WOULD SIGNAL TO THE GOH AND MANY HONDURANS A REDUCED USG INTEREST IN THE QUESTION.

4. THE POSSIBLE ELIMINATION OF THE MILGP IN HONDURAS WOULD PROBABLY CAUSE MANY MEMBERS OF THE HONDURAN MILITARY TO REACT NEGATIVELY. MANY HONDURAN OFFICERS STILL HARBOR LATENT RESENTMENT ABOUT WHAT THEY PERCEIVE AS A US FAILURE TO COME TO HONDURAS'S AID IN THE 1969 WAR WITH EL SALVADOR. THIS LATENT ATTITUDE COULD BECOME ACTIVE IF THE MILGP IS ELIMINATED, WITH CONSEQUENT DAMAGE TO US RELATIONS WITH THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT AND, BY EXTENSION, TO RELATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT.

5. THERE IS A PROPOSAL TO ELIMINATE THE DAO OFFICE IN HONDURAS BY SEPTEMBER, 1977. THE ELIMINATION OF BOTH MILGP AND DAO OFFICES WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY DEPRIVE THE MISSION OF A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF ITS AVAILABILITY TO IN-*)73;3 *-;94-?)6 ?8)-534-) 43)-589, . IN ADDITION, THE "EVENHANDEDNESS" POLICY MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE REMAINING MILITARY PRESENCE IN EL SALVADOR IN AFFORDING EQUAL TREATMENT TO BOTH COUNTRIES.

6. A FURTHER PROBLEM IS THAT THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE
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AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOH AND THE USG STATES THAT A PRIOR ONE-YEAR NOTIFICATION IS REQUIRED FOR TERMINATION OF THE AGREEMENT. THE AGREEMENT ENTERED INTO FORCE ON MAY 20, 1954 (TIAS 2975). IT IS CLEAR THAT THE POSSIBLE INTERNATIONAL LEGAL OBLIGATIONS OF THE US SHOULD BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED IN ANY DECISION REGARDING THE MILGP.

7. IN SUMMARY, I FEEL THAT THE USG MILITARY PRESENCE IN

HONDURAS IS IMPORTANT TO THE OBJECTIVES OF THE MISSION.
THERE COULD BE SOME REDUCTION OF PERSONNEL WITHOUT HARM TO
THE MILGP'S ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS. I AM CONVINCED, HOWEVER,
THAT THE ELIMINATION OF THE MILGP (AND DAO) WOULD MATERIALLY
LESSEN THE POSSIBILITY OF INFLUENCING THE MILITARY ESTAB-
LISHMENT AND, BY EXTENSION, THE GOH. SUCH A SOURCE OF
ACTION CAN BE EXPECTED TO LIMIT OUR ABILITY TO PROMOTE
US NATIONAL INTERESTS IN A COUNTRY THAT IS PRESENTLY RULED
BY THE MILITARY AND WHICH CAN BE EXPECTED TO MAINTAIN A
PREDOMINANT INFLUENCE IN ANY FUTURE GOVERNMENT. SANCHEZ

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